

# The Department of State



## News Release

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United Nations

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### ARMS, ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

*President Jimmy Carter before the Permanent Representatives of the United Nations.*

I am proud to be with you tonight in this house where the shared hopes of mankind can find a voice.

I have come here to express my own support and the continuing support of my country for the ideals of the United Nations.

We are proud that, for the 32 years since its creation, the United Nations has met on American soil. And we share with you the commitments to freedom, self-government, human dignity, mutual toleration, and peaceful resolution of disputes which the founding principles of the United Nations—and also Secretary General Kurt Waldheim—so well represent.

No one nation by itself can build a world which reflects all of these fine values. But the United States, my own country, has a reservoir of strength—economic strength which we are willing to share, military strength which we hope never to use again, and the strength of ideals which we are determined fully to maintain as the backbone of our foreign policy.

It is now eight weeks since I became President. I have brought to office a firm commitment to a more open foreign policy. And I believe that the American people expect me to speak frankly about the policies that we intend to pursue, and it is in that spirit that I speak to you tonight about our own hopes for the future.

I see a hopeful world, a world dominated by increasing demands for basic freedoms, for fundamental rights, for higher standards of human existence. We are eager to take part in the shaping of that world.

But in seeking such a better world, we are not blind to the reality of disagreement, nor to the persisting dangers that confront us. Every headline reminds us of bitter divisions, of national hostilities, of territorial conflicts, of ideological competition. In the Middle East, peace is a quarter of a

century overdue; a gathering racial conflict threatens southern Africa; new tensions are rising in the Horn of Africa; disputes in the eastern Mediterranean remain to be resolved.

Perhaps even more ominous is the staggering arms race. The Soviet Union and the United States have accumulated thousands of nuclear weapons. Our two nations now have almost five times more missile warheads today than we had just eight years ago. But we are not five times more secure. On the contrary, the arms race has only increased the risk of conflict.

We can only improve this world if we are realistic about its complexities. The disagreements we face are deeply rooted, and they often raise difficult philosophical as well as territorial issues. They will not be solved easily. They will not be solved quickly. The arms race is now imbedded in the fabric of international affairs and can only be contained with the greatest of difficulty. Poverty and inequality are of such monumental scope that it will take decades of deliberate and determined effort even to improve the situation substantially.

I stress these dangers and these difficulties because I want all of us to dedicate ourselves to a prolonged and persistent effort designed;

- First, to maintain peace and to reduce the arms race;
- Second, to build a better and more cooperative international economic system; and
- Third, to work with potential adversaries as well as our friends to advance the cause of human rights.

In seeking these goals, I realize that the United States cannot solve the problems of the world. We can sometimes help others resolve their differences, but we cannot do so by imposing our own particular solutions.

### Immediate Challenges

In the coming months, there is important work for all of us in advancing international



cooperation and economic progress in the cause of peace:

- Later this spring, the leaders of several industrial nations of Europe, North America, and Japan will confer at a summit meeting in London on a broad range of issues. We must promote the health of our industrial economies. We must seek to restrain inflation and bring ways of managing our own domestic economies for the benefit of the global economy.

- We must move forward with the multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva.

- The United States will support the efforts of our friends to strengthen the democratic institutions in Europe and particularly in Portugal and Spain.

- We will work closely with our European friends on the forthcoming Review Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. We want to make certain that the provisions of the Helsinki Agreement are fully implemented and that progress is made to further East-West cooperation.

- In the Middle East, we are doing our best to clarify areas of disagreement, to surface underlying consensus, and to help to develop mutually acceptable principles that can form a flexible framework for a just and permanent settlement.

- In southern Africa, we will work to help attain majority rule through peaceful means. We believe that such fundamental transformation can be achieved, to the advantage of both the blacks and whites who live in that region of the world. Anything less than that may bring a protracted race war, with devastating consequences to all. This week the Government of the United States took action to bring our country into full compliance with UN sanctions against the illegal regime in Rhodesia. And I will sign that bill Friday in Washington.

- We will put our relations with Latin America on a more constructive footing, recognizing the global character of the region's problems. We are also working to resolve in amicable negotiations the future of the Panama Canal.

- We will continue our efforts to develop further our relationships with the People's Republic of China. We recognize our parallel strategic interests in maintaining stability in Asia, and we will act in the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué.

- In Southeast Asia and in the Pacific, we will strengthen our association with our traditional friends, and we will seek to improve relations with our former adversaries. We have a mission now in Vietnam seeking peaceful resolution of the differences that have separated us for so long.

- Throughout the world, we are ready to normalize our relationships and to seek reconciliation with all states which are ready to work with us in promoting global progress and global peace.

#### Global Arms Control

Above all, the search for peace requires a much more deliberate effort to contain the global arms race. Let me speak in this context first of the U.S.-Soviet Union relationship and then of the wider need to contain the proliferation of arms throughout the global community.

I intend to pursue the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between the United States and the Soviet Union with determination and with energy. Our Secretary of State will visit Moscow in just a few days.

SALT is extraordinarily complicated. But the basic fact is that, while the negotiations remain deadlocked, the arms race goes on—the security of both countries and the entire world is threatened.

My preference would be for strict controls or even a freeze on new types and new generations of weaponry and with a deep reduction in the strategic arms of both sides. Such a major step toward not only arms limitations but arms reductions would be welcomed by mankind as a giant step toward peace.

Alternatively, and perhaps much more easily, we could conclude a limited agreement based on those elements of the Vladivostok Accord on which we can find complete consensus and set aside for prompt consideration and subsequent negotiations the more contentious issues and also the deeper reductions in nuclear weapons which I favor.

We will also explore the possibility of a total cessation of nuclear testing. While our ultimate goal is for all nuclear powers to end testing, we do not regard this as a prerequisite for the suspension of tests by the two principal nuclear powers—the Soviet Union and the United States. We should, however, also pursue a broad and permanent multilateral agreement on this issue.

We will also seek to establish Soviet willingness to reach agreement with us on mutual military restraint in the Indian Ocean, as well as on such matters as arms exports to the troubled areas of the world.

In proposing such accommodations I remain fully aware that American-Soviet relations will continue to be highly competitive. But I believe that our competition must be balanced by cooperation in preserving peace and, thus, our mutual survival. I will seek such cooperation earnestly with

the Soviet Union—earnestly, constantly, and sincerely.

However, the effort to contain the arms race is not a matter just for the United States and Soviet Union alone. There must be a wider effort to reduce the flow of weapons to all the troubled spots of this globe. Accordingly, we will try to reach broader agreements among producer and consumer nations to limit the export of conventional arms, and we, ourselves, will take the initiative on our own, because the United States has become one of the major arms suppliers of the world.

We are deeply committed to halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. And we will undertake a new effort to reach multilateral agreements designed to provide legitimate supplies of nuclear fuels for the production of energy, while controlling poisonous and dangerous atomic wastes.

Working with other nations represented here, we hope to advance the cause of peace. We will make a strong and a positive contribution at the upcoming special session on disarmament [of the UN General Assembly], which I understand will commence next year.

#### A Just Economic System

But the search for peace also means the search for justice. One of the greatest challenges before us as a nation—and therefore one of our greatest opportunities—is to participate in molding a global economic system which will bring greater prosperity to all the people of all countries.

I come from a part of the United States which is largely agrarian and which for many years did not have the advantages of adequate transportation or capital or management skills or education which were available in the industrial states of our country. So I can sympathize with the leaders of the developing nations, and I want them to know that we will do our part.

To this end, the United States will be advancing proposals aimed at meeting the basic human needs of the developing world and helping them to increase their productive capacity. I have asked Congress to provide \$7½ billion of foreign assistance in the coming year, and I will work to insure sustained American assistance as the process of global economic development continues. I am also urging the Congress of our country to increase our contributions to the United Nations Development Program and meet in full our pledges to multilateral lending institutions—especially the International Development Association of the World Bank.

We remain committed to an open interna-

tional trading system, one which does not ignore domestic concerns in the United States. We have extended duty-free treatment to many products from the developing countries. In the multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva, we have offered substantial trade concessions on the goods of primary interest to developing countries. And in accordance with the Tokyo Declaration, we are also examining ways to provide additional consideration for the special needs of developing countries.

The United States is willing to consider with a positive and open attitude the negotiation of agreements to stabilize commodity prices, including the establishment of a common funding arrangement for financing buffer stocks where they are a part of individual, negotiated agreements.

I also believe that the developing countries must acquire fuller participation in the global economic decisionmaking process. Some progress has been already made in this regard by expanding participation of developing countries in the International Monetary Fund.

We must use our collective natural resources wisely and constructively. We have not always done so. Today our oceans are being plundered and defiled. With a renewed spirit of cooperation and hope, we join in the Conference of the Law of the Sea in order to correct the mistakes of past generations and to insure that all nations can share the bounties of the eternal seas in the future.

We must also recognize that the world is facing serious shortages of energy. This is truly a global problem. For our part, we are determined to reduce waste and to work with others toward a fair and proper sharing of the benefits and costs of energy resources.

#### Human Rights Issues

The search for peace and justice means also respect for human dignity. All the signatories of the UN Charter have pledged themselves to observe and to respect basic human rights. Thus, no member of the United Nations can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. Equally, no member can avoid its responsibilities to review and to speak when torture or unwarranted deprivation occurs in any part of the world.

The basic thrust of human affairs points toward a more universal demand for fundamental human rights. The United States has a historical birthright to be associated with this process.

We in the United accept this responsibility in the fullest and the most constructive sense. Ours is a commitment and not just a political posture. I know perhaps as well as anyone that our own



ideals in the area of human rights have not always been attained in the United States, but the American people have an abiding commitment to the full realization of these ideals. And we are determined, therefore, to deal with our deficiencies quickly and openly. We have nothing to conceal.

To demonstrate this commitment, I will seek congressional approval and sign the UN covenants on economic, social, and cultural rights and the covenant on civil and political rights. And I will work closely with our own Congress in seeking to support the ratification not only of these two instruments but the UN Genocide Convention and the Treaty for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as well. I have just removed all restrictions on American travel abroad, and we are moving now to liberalize almost completely travel opportunities to America.

The United Nations is the global forum dedicated to the peace and well-being of every individual—no matter how weak, no matter how poor. But we have allowed its human rights machinery to be ignored and, sometimes, politicized. There is much that can be done to strengthen it.

The Human Rights Commission should be prepared to meet more often. And all nations should be prepared to offer its fullest cooperation—to the Human Rights Commission—to welcome its investigations, to work with its officials and, to act on its reports.

I would like to see the entire UN human rights division moved back here to the central headquarters, where its activities will be in the forefront of our attention and where the attention of the press corps can stimulate us to deal honestly with this sensitive issue. The proposal made 12 years ago by the Government of Costa Rica—to establish a UN High Commission for Human Rights—also deserves our renewed attention and our support.

Strengthened international machinery will help us all to close the gap between promise and performance in protecting human rights. When

gross or widespread violation takes place—contrary to international commitments—it is of concern to all. The solemn commitments of the UN Charter, of the UN's Universal Declaration for Human Rights, of the Helsinki Accords, and of many other international instruments must be taken just as seriously as commercial or security agreements.

This issue is important in itself. It should not block progress on other important matters affecting the security and well-being of our people and of world peace. It is obvious that the reduction of tensions, the control of nuclear arms, the achievement of harmony in the troubled areas of the world, and the provision of food, good health, and education will independently contribute to advancing the human condition.

In our relationships with other countries, these mutual concerns will be reflected in our political, our cultural, and our economic attitudes.

### Conclusion

These then are our basic priorities as we work with other members to strengthen and to improve the United Nations:

- First, we will strive for peace in the troubled areas of the world;
- Second, we will aggressively seek to control the weaponry of war;
- Third, we will promote a new system of international economic progress and cooperation; and
- Fourth, we will be steadfast in our dedication to the dignity and well-being of people throughout the world.

I believe that this is a foreign policy that is consistent with my own Nation's historic values and commitments. And I believe that it is a foreign policy that is consonant with the ideals of the United Nations.

Thank you very much.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, U.S.A.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520

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HAROLD E. MEINHEIT  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
102 WEST AVE  
ITHACA

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